

# Surah Nūh

(Noah)

This Sūrah is Makkī. It contains 28 verses and 2 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 28

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ فِرْمَةِ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ  
الْأَيْمَمِ ﴿١﴾ قَالَ يَقُولُمْ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَعْبُدُو  
وَالْأَطْيَعُونَ ﴿٣﴾ يَعْفُرُ لَكُمْ مِنْ دُنُورِكُمْ وَيُؤْخِرُكُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمَّىٰ  
إِنْ أَجَلَ اللَّهُ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤْخِرُهُ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّي إِنِّي  
دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا لَقَلْمَ نَزِدُهُمْ دُعَاءً إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٥﴾  
وَلَيْسَ كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرُ لَهُمْ جَعْلُوا أَصْبَعَهُمْ فِي أَذَانِهِمْ  
وَاسْتَغْشَوْا يَيْمَاهُمْ وَأَصْرَوْا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا أَسْتَكْبَارًا ﴿٦﴾ لَمْ يُمْكِنْ  
دَعْوَتِهِمْ جَهَارًا لَمْ يُمْكِنْ أَعْلَمَتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرَتْ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ﴿٧﴾  
فَقُلْتُ أَسْتَغْفِرُ رَبِّكُمْ قَدْ إِنِّي كَانَ غَنَّاً لَهُ لَمْ يُرِسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
مِدَارًا ﴿٨﴾ وَيَمْدُدُكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَيُبَيِّنُ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ جَنْبَتٍ وَيَجْعَلُ  
لَكُمْ أَنْهَرًا ﴿٩﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَأَتْرُجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُمْ  
أَطْوَارًا ﴿١١﴾ أَلَمْ تَرُوا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبَعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طَبَاقًا ﴿١٢﴾  
وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَاللَّهُ

أَنْبَتُكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ۝١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا ۝١٨﴾ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ۝١٩﴾ لِتَسْلُكُوهَا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا ۝٢٠﴾ قَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصُونِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مِنْ لَمْ يَرِدُهُ مَالَهُ، وَوَلَدُهُ إِلَّا حَسَارًا ۝٢١﴾ وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كُبَارًا ۝٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوا لَا تَدْرُنَّ إِلَهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَدْرُنَّ وَدًا وَلَا سُوَاعًا ۝٢٣﴾ وَلَا يَعُوْثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا ۝٢٤﴾ وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا ۝٢٥﴾ وَلَا تَزِدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ۝٢٦﴾ مِمَّا خَطَّيْتُهُمْ أَغْرِقُوهُمْ فَادْخُلُوهُمْ نَارًا ۝٢٧﴾ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوهُ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا ۝٢٨﴾ وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِيْنَ دِيَارًا ۝٢٩﴾ إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرُهُمْ يُضْلُّوْ عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوْ إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا ۝٣٠﴾ رَّبِّ اغْفِرْلِي وَلِوَالدَّيِّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتَيِّ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝٣١﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۝٣٢﴾ وَلَا تَزِدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا ۝٣٣﴾

We sent Nūh to his people saying (to him), "Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them." [1] He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner for you [2] to say that you must worship Allah, and fear Him, and obey me, [3] and Allah will forgive you your sins, and will defer you to an appointed term. Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred, if you only know!" [4] He said, "My Lord, I have called my people night and day, [5] but my call did not cause them to progress but in running away. [6] And whenever I called them, so that You forgive them, they put their fingers into their ears, and wrapped their clothes around themselves, and grew obstinate, and waxed proud in extreme arrogance. [7] Then I called them loudly, [8] then I spoke to them in public and spoke to them in private. [9] So I said, "Pray to your Lord for your forgiveness, Indeed He is Very-Forgiving, [10] and (if you do so,) He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, [11] and will help you with riches and sons, and will cause gardens to grow for you, and cause rivers to flow for you. [12] What has happened to you that you do not appreciate Majesty of Allah, [13] while He has created you in different phases? [14] Did you not see how

Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, [15] and has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp? [16] And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth a perfect growth, [17] then He will send you back into it, and will bring you forth once again. [18] And Allah has made the earth a spread for you, [19] so that you may go about its broad ways." [20]

And said Nuh, "My Lord, they disobeyed me, and followed him whose wealth and children added nothing to him but loss, [21] and they devised an enormous plan, [22] and said, 'Never forsake your gods, and never forsake Wadd, nor Suwa', nor *yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*. [23] And they have led many astray. And (O my Lord,) let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path." [24] Because of their sins, they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah. [25] And said Nuh, "My Lord, do not leave on earth even a single inhabitant from the disbelievers (surviving). [26] If You leave them (surviving), they will lead Your slaves astray, and will beget none but a sinful disbeliever. [27] My Lord, grant pardon to me, and to my parents, and to everyone who enters my home as a believer, and to all the believing men and believing women, and do not increase the wrongdoers but in ruin. [28]

### Commentary

(and Allah will forgive you your sins, 71:4). The particle *min* is often used to indicate division into parts, that is, to refer to only a part of an amount, group or number. If it is taken in that sense here, it would signify that by embracing the faith only those sins would be forgiven which pertains to the Divine rights because violation of human rights would be forgiven only when the believer fulfills the human rights which he has violated [such as pecuniary obligations] and if they cannot be fulfilled [such as hurting somebody physically or verbally], then the person who has been so hurt must first be requested to forgive. The *hadīth* which reports that by embracing the faith all sins are forgiven must be understood in the light of the foregoing explanation. In other words, the *hadīth* has the same conditions attached to it as the verse under comment, that is, violation of the rights of the human beings is not forgiven except upon fulfillment of those rights or seeking forgiveness from the victims of that violation. Other scholars of *Tafsīr*

interpret the particle *min* as *zā'idah*, (having no meaning, and added only because of usage). In this way, it signifies that all their sins would be forgiven. However, on the basis of other texts, this general expression is subject to the conditions mentioned above.

(and will defer you to an appointed term. 71:4). The word *ajal* means 'term' or 'period' and the word *musammā* means 'appointed'. The verse purports to say that if they embrace the faith, Allah will defer them until a specified time and will not destroy them before their appointed time in this world. On the other hand, if they do not embrace the faith, it is likely that they might be punished and destroyed before their appointed term. In other words, when the Divine decree of punishment is in active operation, it cannot be deferred. This indicates that at times the appointed term or life span has a condition attached to it. If a particular person fulfills the attached condition, his life span, for instance, will be eighty years; and if he did not fulfill the condition, he will meet his death at the age of seventy years. If a person is ungrateful to Allah, his life span will decrease; and if he is grateful to Him, his life span will increase. Authentic *ahādīth* report that maintaining family ties and obedience to parents increase the life span. In short, the verse is proof of the fact that obedience to Allah, righteousness and maintaining the family ties truly increase the life span of a person.

### Fluctuation in Man's Life Span

Mazhārī explains in his commentary that there are two categories of Predestination. One of them is termed *taqdir mu'baram* 'Final and Definitive Destiny' and the other is termed *taqdir mu'allaq* 'Conditional Destiny'. The former is defined as the decisive and unalterable Destiny that is never changed; and the latter is defined as the Decree to which is attached a condition. It would be recorded in the Preserved Tablet as conditional statements thus: If a person obeys Allah, then his life span will be extended to, for example, seventy years. 'If he disobeys Him, then he will die at the age of fifty years.' The latter category is alterable. The Qur'an mentions both the types of Destiny thus:

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثْبِتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allah wipes off what He wills and affirms (what He wills). And with Him is the Mother Book. [13:39]

The term 'Mother Book' refers to that Book in which is recorded the 'Final Destiny' and Allah is fully aware of whether or not the condition that is recorded in 'Conditional Destiny' will be fulfilled. The 'Final Destiny' is the exclusive domain of Divine knowledge. Recorded there are the decisions, and commands that issue forth as the final outcome after the conditions of deeds have been fulfilled or supplication has been answered. Therefore, that is totally free of obliteration and assertion and addition and deletion.

Sayyidnā Salmān al-Fārisī رض has reported Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying:

لَا يَرْدِدُ الْقَضَاءَ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ وَلَا يُزِيدُ فِي الْعُمُرِ إِلَّا الْبَرُّ رواه الترمذى (مظہری)

"Nothing but supplication averts the decree, and nothing but good treatment of parents increases life span." [Transmitted by Tirmidhī, as quoted by Mazhāri]

The word *al-birr* means 'to treat parents kindly'. The purport of the *hadīth* is to show that on account of these deeds the 'Conditional Destiny' can be changed. In short, the verse under comment says: أَجَلٌ مُّسَمٌ (and will defer you to an appointed term ... 71:4).

The deferment is contingent upon embracing the faith. This describes the 'Conditional Destiny' about their life span, the knowledge of which probably was given to Nūh عليه السلام. As a result, he explained to his people that they are given respite till their full term during which, if they embraced the faith, Allah will not destroy them by worldly punishment. If they failed to embrace the faith, Allah will destroy them in this world before their appointed term. In addition, they will suffer eternal perdition of the Hereafter. It further shows that death is inevitable when the time specified by Allah in the final destiny arrives, even if they embrace the faith. Death in any case is inescapable. Allah has, in His consummate wisdom, not made this world immortal. It must, of necessity, perish. Faith and obedience, on the one hand, and infidelity and sinning, on the other, do not make any difference. The fragment of the verse that reads:

إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤْخَرُ  
(Indeed when Allah's term comes, it is not deferred—  
71:4) refers to this immutable destiny.

Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رض reports that Nūh عليه السلام was commissioned as a

Prophet at the age of forty years and, according to the explicit text of the Qur'ān, he lived for nine hundred and fifty years. During this long life, he neither gave up his attempt at reform nor did he lose hope. His nation persecuted him but he exercised patience.

On the authority of Dāḥḥāk's ﴿ narration, Ibn 'Abbās ﴿ reports that Nūh's ﷺ people would beat him up until he falls. They would then wrap him up in a blanket and put him into a house, thinking that he was dead. When he comes to his senses the next day, he would call them towards Allah and preach to them. Muḥammad Ibn Iṣhāq narrates from 'Ubaid Ibn 'Amr Laithī that according to a report he has received, when his nation would throttle him, he would fall fainted and when he recovered from his fainting, he would pray for them, thus:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِقَوْمِيْ أَنْهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"O Allah, forgive my people because they do not know."

When the first generation of Nūh ﷺ failed him, he still held out hope that their children might embrace the faith, but that generation too passed away without faith. Expecting that the third generation might embrace the faith, he continued with his arduous task of preaching the truth, but that generation too frustrated him. Miraculously, Prophet Nūh ﷺ was granted a long life [950 years] but the different generations of his people did not have such long lives.

Prophet Nūh ﷺ preached to his people day and night and spoke to them in public and in private, individually and collectively. He reminded them of the great favours and gifts that Allah had bestowed upon them, and the great blessings that await them in Paradise if they chose the path of rectitude. He also preached to them that if they embraced the faith and acted righteously, the doors of comfort, prosperity, welfare and well-being will open up for them in this world as well. He drew their attention to the manifestation of Allah's perfect power. But they did not pay heed. On the other hand, Allah informed Prophet Nūh ﷺ through revelation that none of his people were going to embrace the faith except for those who have already done so, describing it thus:

إِنَّهُ لَنْ يُؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ إِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ أَمَنَ

'And it was revealed to Nūh that none of your people would ever

believe except those who have already believed [11:36]

He warned them of the evil consequences of rejection of the Divine Message. But all his preaching and warning, his sympathy with and solicitude for, their well-being only met with ridicule, opposition and abuse; and instead of following one whose heart was full of love for them, they chose to follow those leaders who led them to destruction. Prophet Nūh's ﷺ exhortations and preaching of a whole lifetime proved a voice in the wilderness, generation after generation passed away, every coming generation proved to be worse and more wicked than the previous generation. So, he prayed to Allah to ruin and destroy the enemies of the Truth. As a result, the prayer was answered and the entire nation was drowned and destroyed except for the believers who were asked to embark upon the ark. Prophet Nūh ﷺ invited them to believe in, and pray to Allah, to seek His pardon for their past sins and explained to them the worldly advantage of this:

بُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَذْرَارًا. وَيُمْدِدُكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِينَ

(and He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, and will help you with riches and sons, ....71:11-12)

Most scholars have deduced from this verse that, by repenting and asking for pardon of sins, Allah sends down rain in abundance according to the need of time; no famine occurs; and through the blessings of praying for pardon of sins, Allah will reinforce people with more wealth and children. Occasionally, the consummate wisdom of Allah [which is unfathomable] wills the contrary situation. Generally, however, the Divine custom with people is to alleviate calamities if they repent, pray for pardon and give up sins. Versions of *aḥādīth* confirm this.

أَلَمْ تَرَوْ كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طَبَاقًا. وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا

(Did you not see how Allah has created seven heavens one upon another, and has made the moon a light therein? ....71:15-16)

These verses are adduced as proof positive of Divine Oneness and His power. He has created seven heavens, one on top of the other, and placed the moon as a light in them. The prepositional phrase in the verse apparently indicates that the moon is placed in the body of the heavens. The subject is fully discussed in Sūrah Al-Furqān under the following verse:

تَبَرَّكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُّبِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾

Glorious is the One who made stellar formations in the sky and placed therein a lamp (sun) and a bright moon. [25:61]

Complaining about his people, Prophet Nūh ﷺ said:

(وَمَكْرُوا مَكْرًا كُكَارًا) (and they devised an enormous plan....71:22). In other words, they hatched a mighty plot. They rejected the message and persecuted Prophet Nūh ﷺ. In addition, they let loose hooligans and hoodlums on him. They agreed that they will not abandon their gods, especially the five major idols whose names appear in the following verse:

(لَا تَنْدَرُنَّ وَدَأْلًا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَعْوَثُ وَيَعْوَقُ وَنَسْرًا) (and never forsake Wadd, nor Suwā', nor yaghūth and Ya'ūq and Nasr.....71:23). Imām Baghawī reports that these five were in fact righteous servants Allah who lived in the intervening period between Prophets 'Ādam and Nūh عليهما السلام. There were many people who held them in high regard and followed their footsteps. Even after their death, they followed their footsteps and complied with Divine injunctions. A while later, Satan misled them. He put it to them that if they make pictures of their righteous elders and place them in front, their worship would be perfect and they would attain the quality of humility and humbleness. Those people fell into the Satanic trap and carved statues of them and placed them in their temples. When they saw the statues of their elders, their memories were refreshed and experienced a special feeling. That generation gradually died and a new generation came up. Satan played another trick with them. He imparted to them that the object of worship of their elders were statues and idols. They fell for this trick and worshipped them. This is the beginning of idol-worship or idolatry. People of Prophet Nūh ﷺ gradually got steeped in idolatry. They had many idols, the five mentioned in the verse under comment being the most popular because of the deep love they had for them.

(وَلَا تَرِدَ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ...) (...let not the wrongdoers progress in anything but deviation from the right path.....71:24). This is the supplication of Prophet Nūh ﷺ against his people. It may not be surmised that the duty and obligation of a Prophetic office is to guide the people, but here Prophet Nūh ﷺ is praying for increase in his people's misguidance. Prophet Nūh ﷺ did not invoke this curse out of despair or impatience. In fact, he

invoked it when, after doing full justice to his mission for many centuries, his people chose the path of deviation, rebellion, disbelief and obstinacy and persisted in it until they had reached a point of no return, of which Allah informed him thus, 'And it was revealed to Nūh that none of your people would ever believe except those who have already believed' [11:36]. This situation made it clear to him that his people would definitely and certainly die in the state of disbelief. So he prayed for their final destiny to overtake them sooner and destroy them.

(بِمَا كَحَّلُتْهُمْ أَغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخِلُو نَارًا، فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آثَارًا) Because of their sins they were drowned, and then admitted into the Fire. So they found no helpers for them besides Allah.....71:25). The 'sins' referred to here are unpardonable sins of '*kufr* and *shirk*'. They were drowned in water and emerged in fire, an opposing punishment which is not impossible for Divine power. Obviously, the 'fire' mentioned in the verse does not refer to the fire of Hell, but refers to the fire in the realm of '*Barzakh*' (the existence between the worldly life and the life of the Hereafter). The Qur'an speaks of the fire in the realm of '*Barzakh*'. It is evident that Sayyidna Nūh's ﷺ people will be punished in Hell-Fire in the Hereafter after resurrection and accounting for their deeds.

### **Qur'an Confirms Punishment in the Grave**

The verse under comment confirms that people will be punished in the realm of *Barzakh*, usually referring to the period of stay in the grave. This further proves that, since the evil-doers will be punished in the grave, the righteous believers will also be rewarded and blessed with favours. Authentic and successively transmitted *aḥādīth* report about the reward and punishment in the grave so abundantly and clearly that its reality cannot be denied or rejected. Therefore, there is a total agreement of the Ummah on this issue; and belief in it is the symbol of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*.

**Alhamdulillah**  
**The Commentary on**  
**Sūrah Nūh**  
**Ends here**